

**MENDOCINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S COAST SECTOR SUB-STATION
AND HOLDING CELLS IN FORT BRAGG
November 3, 2005**

Summary

In accordance with duties required, the Grand Jury visited the Mendocino County Sheriff's Coast Sector Sub-Station and Holding Cells.

Background

California Penal Code §919 (b) states that "The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county." The 2005/2006 Mendocino County Grand Jury undertook their charge with visits to the Mendocino County Sheriff's Coast Sector Holding Cells.

Methods

The Grand Jury toured the Mendocino County Sheriff's Coast Sector Holding Facility, including the Sally Port (inmate delivery), Booking Area, and Holding Cells. The Grand Jury interviewed Sheriff's Department personnel.

Findings

1. The Mendocino County Sheriff Coast Sector Sub-Station is staffed in accordance with its budget: one Lieutenant, three Sergeants, eleven Deputies, one Bailiff, one Detective, and one Secretary.
2. The Sheriff's Department designates the area between Rockport and Gualala as the Coast Sector.
3. A Coast Sector deputy sheriff generates approximately 20 hours of overtime every two weeks.
4. Coast Sector patrol work is generally limited to dispatch responses, process serving, transportation of detainees, and other departmental duties.
5. Deputies have recently been issued Tasers and instructed in their use by POST-trained officers (Police Officer Standard Training).
6. Storage space for evidence is inadequate.
7. Detainees at Fort Bragg are normally booked and transported to the County Jail in Ukiah or to another facility within two hours.
8. Detainees on the South Coast (from Navarro to the south County line) are taken directly to the County Jail in Ukiah.
9. The Coast Sector Sub-Station Holding Cells are clean.
10. The Coast Sector Holding Facility lacks an audio monitoring system.
11. The handicapped rails, benches, air duct screens, wall panel, and faucet handles in the Holding Cells could be used by a prisoner to hang him/herself.

12. The central heating and cooling system in the Sheriff's Coast Sector Sub-Station is inadequate.
13. Given the heavy use of the Sheriff's Coast Sector offices, cleaning and routine maintenance beyond the regularly scheduled janitorial service provided by County General Services must be performed by the Sub-Station staff.
14. The emergency button/bell system installed in the Sub-Station is unmonitored and connected only to offices that are often unoccupied.
15. In the opinion of the Sheriff's Department Coast Sector Sub-Station, methamphetamine, along with other drugs including alcohol, is a major factor in most arrests.

Recommendations

The Grand Jury recommends that:

1. the Evidence Room (storage space for evidence) be enlarged and upgraded. (Finding 6)
2. an audio monitoring system be installed to bring the Sub-Station into compliance with California Code of Regulations §6031. (Finding 10)
3. components in the Holding Cells that present a danger to inmates be corrected. (Finding 11)
4. the heating and cooling system in the Sub-Station be upgraded. (Finding 12)
5. the frequency of janitorial services in the Sub-Station be increased. (Finding 13)
6. the emergency button/bell system installed in the Sub-Station be monitored at all times. (Finding 14)
7. that the BOS amend the County budget to remedy the problems in the Sub-Station Facility. (Findings 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14)

Comments

Despite the excessive workload and the problems with the facility, the staff of the Mendocino County Sheriff Sub-Station in Fort Bragg is providing excellent services. In the opinion of the Sheriff's Department, overtime would not be reduced by additional staff. Adding a substantial number of deputies to the roster would allow the Department to increase the hours of community policing.

Response Required

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, Findings 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and Recommendations 1 through 7.
Sheriff, Mendocino County Sheriff's Department, Findings 1 through 15 and Recommendations 1 through 6.

Response Requested

Director, Mendocino County Department of General Services, Findings 6, 10, 11, 12,

13, 14 and Recommendations 1 through 6.